DR. STRANGE
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DOCTOR STRANGE
MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ART
BEWARE THE MYSTIC MAYHEM OF XANDER THE MERCILESS!
A UNIVERSE GONE MAD!

Once he was a man like most *others* — a *worldly* man, seduced and jaded by *material* things. But then he discovered the *separate* reality, where *sorcery* and *men's souls* shaped the forces that shape our *lives*. In that instant, he was *born again*, to become a man like *no* other—a man who left us *behind*, as he strove to stand against the unseen subtle perils hovering *thick* and *black* around our fragile existence...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: Dr. STRANGE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!™

HIS NAME IS DOCTOR STRANGE, AND HE IS THE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS. HE IS USED TO SOARING THROUGH ALIEN DIMENSIONS, THROUGH TIME CONTINUUMS, AND BEYOND THE OUTER WORLDS.
THIS EVENING, HOWEVER, THE PATH HE AND HIS DISCIPLE CLEA TAKE IS THROUGH THE CORRIDORS OF THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY.
AND THE REASON IS ENOUGH TO CHILL ONE TO THE BONE.
CALL HIM: KANDER THE MERCILESS!
THIS IS WHERE THE MESSAGE SAID FOR US TO COME, CLEA?
IT IS, STEPHEN. THE ROMAN WING OF THE MUSEUM.
MARV WOLFMAN WRITER / EDITOR
RUDY NEBRES GUEST ARTIST
JOHN COSTANZA letterer
MARIE SEVERIN colorist

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COMING SO SOON AFTER MY DESCENT FROM BEING SORCERER SUPREME, THIS SUMMONS IS A MYSTERY.
THERE ARE ONLY A VERY FEW WHO KNOW WHO DOCTOR STRANGE REALLY IS.
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT JUST BECOMING SUS-PICIOUS? YOU'VE BEEN EDGY SINCE THE ANCIENT ONE STRIPPED AWAY YOUR EXTRA POWERS.*
AND NONE OF THEM WOULD TAKE SUCH ELABOR-ATE PRECAUTIONS TO MEET WITH ME.
NOT EDGY...JUST CAUTIOUS.
I'VE GOT TO RELEARN HOW TO USE MY ABILITIES.
AND TO REMEMBER THAT I'M NOT AS POWERFUL AS I ONCE WAS.
YOU'RE NOT SORRY YOU GAVE UP BEING THE SORCERER SUPREME, ARE YOU?
*LAST ISH. -- M.W.
NO, NOT IF IT MEANT FORSAKING MY HUMAN FORM. FOR THE PRESENT, AT LEAST, I PREFER MYSELF THE WAY I AM.
STEPHEN, THE ROMANS WERE INCREDIBLE ARTISANS. THESE STATUES ARE SO MAGNIFICENT.
SO UNLIKE THE ART IN MY DIMENSION.
THESE HAVE SUCH POWER IN THEIR FACES, SUCH STRENGTH.
IT IS ALMOST AS--WHAT?
STEPHEN!
DEMONS OF DEMAK! THE STATUES COME TO LIFE!
I FEARED THIS WAS A TRAP, YET, LIKE A FOOLISH NOVICE-- I WALKED IN HERE WITH MY EYES CLOSED!
THEY ARE STONE, YET THEY CREAK TO LIFE. THEY MOVE UNSTEADILY AT FIRST, UNACCUSTOMED TO WALKING, BUT THEN THEIR STRIDES TAKE ON CONFIDENCE AS THEY CIRCLE ABOUT STRANGE... AS THEY CLOSE IN-- READY TO ATTACK!

STEPHEN! LOOK OUT!
BACK AWAY, CLEA. IT IS BEST IF I CAN MOVE UNENCUMBERED!
SEEMS THAT WHOEVER ANIMATED THESE THINGS GAVE THEM POWER AS WELL.
BUT POWER ALONE IS USELESS. IT IS THE PERSON WHO WIELDS IT THAT IS ALL IMPORTANT.
I COULD HAVE DIFFUSED THEIR PSYCHIC BOLT, BUT MY SIMPLE SPELL DEFLECTED IT-- SENT IT BACK AT ITS CREATOR.
TO LET IT TAKE THE FULL BRUNT.
AH, I SEE THEY HAVE LEARNED-- FOR THEY NOW ATTACK TOGETHER.
BACK, I SAY--
BY ENCHANTMENTS SATANNIC, BY EVIL TYRANNIC NO SPELL SHALL THEY WIELD, TO SHATTER SERAPHIM'S SHIELD!

STEPHEN-- BEHIND YOU!
NO! I CAN'T TURN IN TIME.
MIND'S REELING... CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT...
...CAN'T FIGHT BACK.
OH, NO! THEY'RE TAKING CLEA... BUT--
--NO USE!
THEIR SPELL PREVENTS ME FROM THINKING... FROM CONCENTRATING...
...HAVE TO SHAKE ITS EFFECT OFF... GIVE MYSELF THE CHANCE TO WORK MY OWN SPELL.
TO BUILD UP MY OWN POWER!
BY THE MOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH-- GIVE ME POWER!
GIVE ME THE POWER!
THE POWER!

THANK THE ANCIENT ONE! IT WORKED!
I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH STRENGTH FOR A SECOND TRY.
BUT NOW I'VE GOT TO FIND CLEA...
...THOUGH THEY COULD HAVE TAKEN HER ALMOST ANY-WHERE BY NOW.
I HAVEN'T THE MENTAL ENERGY NEEDED TO SHATTER IT--
EH? ANOTHER ANIMATION BLOCKING MY PATH.
--BUT I THINK I'VE WATCHED THE VALKYRIE IN ACTION LONG ENOUGH TO HAVE PICKED UP A FEW PHYSICAL FIGHTING TRICKS.
SHE'S NOT HERE IN THE GREEK WING, AND THESE MARBLE STATUES SEEM CONTENT TO REMAIN IMMOBILE.
BUT TO SEARCH THIS MUSEUM CAREFULLY WOULD TAKE FOREVER.
AND TIME IS NOT A COMMODITY I READILY HAVE AVAILABLE.
NOT WHILE THE TRUE MENACE STILL LURKS ABOUT UNSEEN--
--THE MENACE WHICH BROUGHT US HERE TO THIS MUSEUM IN THE FIRST PLACE.
ONLY CHANCE... I THINK I'M STRONG ENOUGH TO ALLOW MY ASTRAL BODY TO FLY FREE...
...TO SEARCH AS ONLY IT CAN,
FREE OF ANY PHYSICAL INTERFERENCE... FREE FROM ALL OBSTRUCTIONS...
--THERE IS NOTHING MADE ON EARTH THAT CAN STOP IT.
NOTHING IT CAN NOT ENTER AT WILL.

WHERE IS SHE?
WHERE? WHERE?
WHERE?
NO TRACE, AND I'VE GONE THROUGH MORE THAN HALF THE MUSEUM ALREADY.
I ONLY THIS PREHISTORIC WING AND THE EGYPTIAN ROOMS REMAIN TO BE CHECKED.
SHE'S NOT HERE--AND THAT MEANS, IF SHE'S STILL IN THIS MUSEUM AT ALL...

SHE'S GOT TO BE IN THAT FINAL DISPLAY ROOM.
IT IS BEST NOW TO RETURN TO MY TRUE FORM.
THEN TO FLY THERE READY TO BATTLE WHAT MUST BE FOUGHT.
EH? SHE'S NOT HERE, EITHER, AND YET--I SENSE HER VIBRATIONS NEARBY.
THEY COME FROM THE MUMMY CASE.
PERHAPS--
ILLUSIONS OF IKONN--REVEAL THE TRUTH TO YOUR MASTER!
UNVEIL THE LIES I SEE BEFORE ME!
REVEAL WHAT I'VE COME HERE TO FIND!
THE MUMMY CASE OPENS--THE THREADS UNFURL--
AND... INSIDE--CLEA!
CLEA?!?!

UNCONSCIOUS, SHE WAS PLACED THERE FOR MY BENEFIT.
FOR ME TO FIND.
SOMEONE'S PLAYING GAMES... TESTING ME.
WHAT?
A PSYCHIC BOLT... NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH TO HARM ME, BUT--
IT DID WHAT IT HAD TO DO, STRANGE. IT HERALDED MY COMING.
WHO?
GREETING, STRANGE. THE NAME IS XANDER THE GREAT. XANDER THE MERCILESS!
I'M YOUR NEW MASTER, STRANGE.
AND I'VE COME TO BRING YOU TO MY MASTERS--THE CREATORS. WE HAVE NEED OF YOU IN THE QUADRIVERSE!
SORRY, XANDER. BUT I DON'T ACCEPT INVITATIONS THAT COME WITH THREATS!
THEN I HAVE ORDERS TO DESTROY YOU, STRANGE.
YOU EITHER JOIN THE MASTERS IN THE QUADRIVERSE--
OR YOU DIE!

STRANGE SAYS NOTHING, FOR HIS MIND IS NOW DEEP IN CONCENTRATION. THE LIES, THE IMAGES, AND THE ILLUSIONS WHICH PRESENT THEMSELVES TO HIM MUST BE STRIPPED AWAY.
HIS CHEST HEAVES UNEASILY AS THE AMULET RESTING BY HIS HEART GLOWS FAINTLY AT FIRST, THEN BRIGHTER...
...RELEASING THE ORB...GETTING FREE THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF AGAMOTTO.
IT FLOATS TO THE BROW OF THE MYSTIC MASTER AND ATTACHES ITSELF AS A THIRD EYE.
THE EYE TO WHICH TRUTH MUST BE REVEALED!
THE EYE SHIMMERS, THEN STARES OUT, BREAKING THE MURKINESS OF THE DARK-NIGHTED MUSEUM.
YES, BY ALL MEANS, OBSERVE ME, STRANGE. LEARN WHAT I AM... SEE WHAT I CAN DO, AND YOU WILL KNOW XANDER CANNOT BE DEFEATED.
EXAMINE ME AND THE KNOWLEDGE YOU WILL GAIN WILL PROVE HOW FRUITLESS IT WILL BE TO ENGAGE ME IN BATTLE.
FOR I HAVE BEEN TAUGHT NOT TO BE MERELY YOUR EQUAL--BUT YOUR MASTER!
THERE IS NOTHING TO SAY. STRANGE HAS SEEN THE POWER INHERENT IN THE ALIEN. HE KNOWS THE ODDS ARE AGAINST HIM IN MYSTIC WARFARE...
AND YET, HE STRIKES FIRST!
AFTER ALL, HE IS DOCTOR STRANGE. AND HE WILL NOT BOW TO DEFEAT.

IT'S WORKED... HE'S GONE-- THROWN INTO ANOTHER DIMENSIONAL PLANE!
AND NOW...
...TO FOLLOW HIM--KEEP HIM FROM RETURNING TO THIS MUSEUM...
HE WAS PREPARED TO FIGHT OFF ANY DESTRUCTIVE ATTACK... BUT NOT A SIMPLE SPELL OF TRANSFERENCE.
...AND FROM POSSIBLY DESTROYING THE FRAGILE VALUABLES!
EVEN AS ONE WORLD FADES, ANOTHER GROANS INTO PLAY. BUT THIS IS NOT A WORLD TEEMING WITH LIFE, NOR A PLANET ONE LIVES ON...
...RATHER, THIS IS A WORLD BETWEEN EXISTENCE... TEETERING ON REALITIES.
IT IS A WORLD SANDWICHED BETWEEN ALL OTHER WORLDS.
YOU FOLLOWED ME QUITE QUICKLY, STRANGE. VERY GOOD. I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT YOUR PSYCHIC REFLEXES WOULD HAVE BECOME FAR SLOWER ONCE YOU WERE STRIPPED OF YOUR RANK OF SORCERER SUPREME.
WHAT? YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?
EXPLAIN YOURSELF, XANDER!
I NOT ONLY KNOW OF YOUR RECENT FALL FROM POWER, STRANGE. I WAS THE CAUSE OF IT!

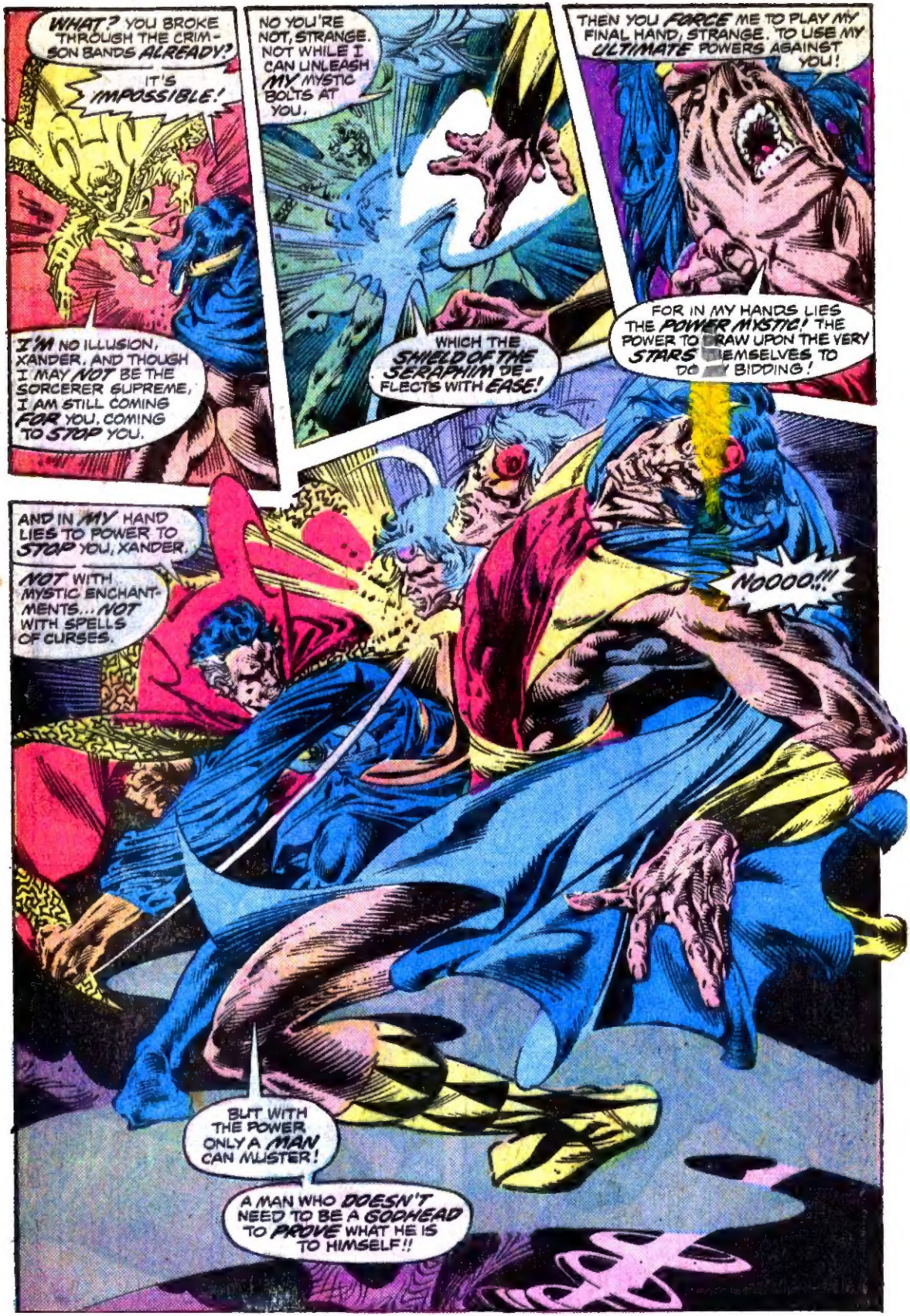
A MIND APART...
THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING GOING ON IN HERE, BUT--
--WHAT IN BLAZES HAPPENED HERE, LADY?
AND WHO THE HECK ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
UNNNMHHHH... MY HEAD. SO MUCH PAIN IN MY HEAD...
...CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT... CAN'T SEEM TO REMEMBER ANYTHING. WHAT WAS IT YOU ASKED ME...?
WALLACE O'NEIL WATCHES THE CONFUSED WOMAN RISE TO HER FEET, HER EYES GAZING BLANKLY ABOUT HER IN OBVIOUS CONFUSION. BUT O'NEIL HAS BEEN ON THE POLICE FORCE FOR ONLY THREE MONTHS, NOW, AND HE IS UNSURE OF WHAT TO DO.
HE TAKES HER UNSTEADY HAND IN HIS TO LEAD THIS STRANGE WOMAN TO HIS WAITING CAR, BUT HE SHUDDERS AS HE TOUCHES HER. THERE IS SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT THIS WOMAN... SOMETHING WHICH FRIGHTENS THIS FLEDGLING POLICEMAN.
WHO ARE YOU, LADY?
I-I DON'T KNOW... I-I CAN'T REMEMBER. I...
HE WILL MAKE HIS REPORT, AND THEN, HE PRAYS, HE WILL FORGET THIS WOMAN WITH THE SILVER HAIR AND THE... ODDLY GLOWING EYES.

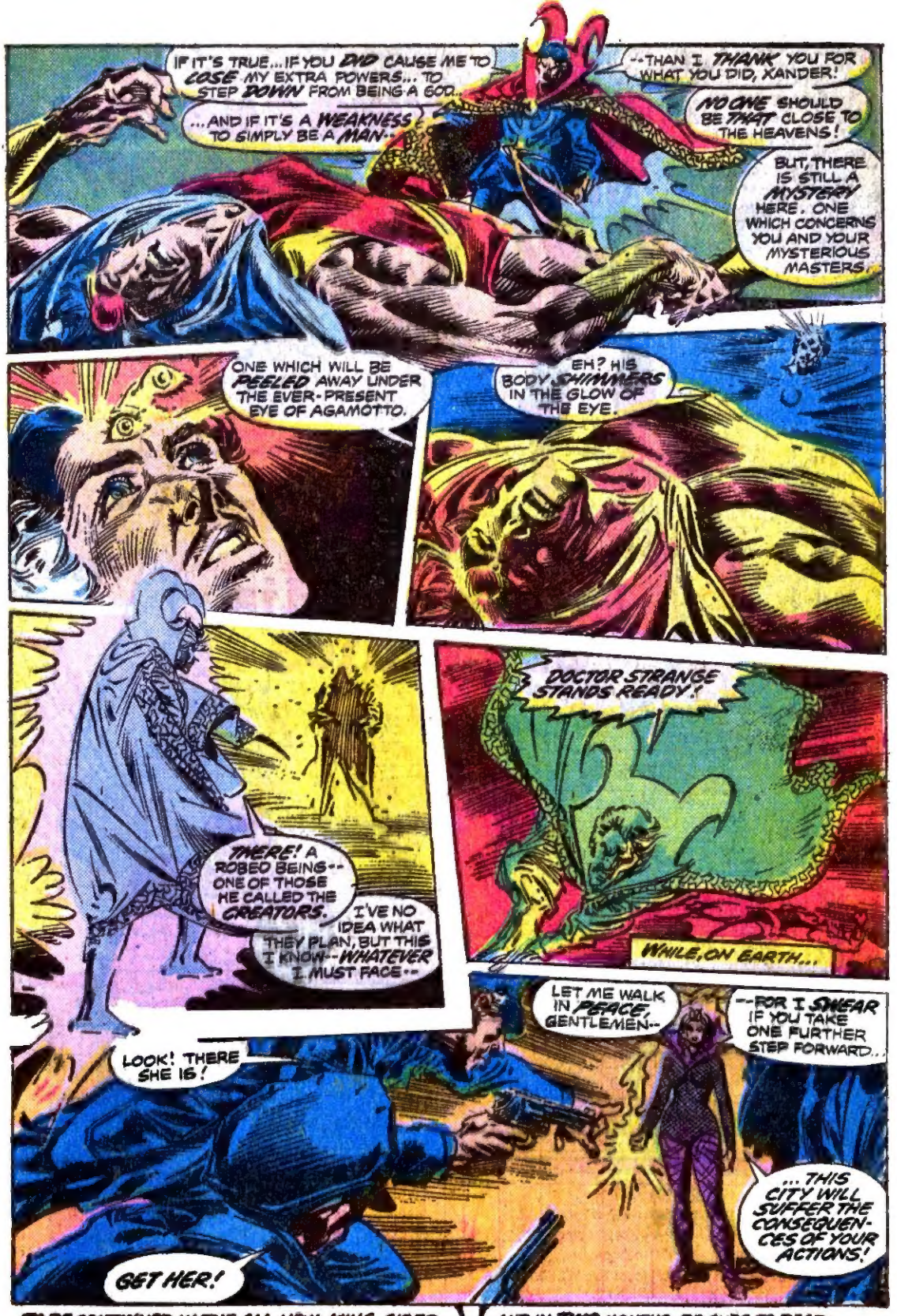
ALL RIGHT, YOUNG LADY-- LET'S TAKE IT FROM THE TOP.. ONCE AGAIN.
I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING. I'M SORRY..
ANN, PLEASE TAKE HER DOWN TO CELL NUMBER 7. WE'LL HOLD HER THERE UNTIL THE DOCTOR CAN GET DOWN HERE.
MOVE OVER, BERTHA. WE'VE GOT A ROOM-MATE FOR YOU.
I'M THRILLED.
NICE BATHING SUIT YOU GOT ON THERE, KID.
NOT TALKING, EH? I SEE YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN THE ROPES AROUND HERE, BABE.
IF BIG BERTHA ASKS YOU A QUESTION, YOU BETTER GIVE BACK AN ANSWER. DIG?
STILL WON'T TALK? WELL, BABE, THIS TIME YOU'RE GONNA LEARN THE LESSON THE HARD WAY.
AND WHEN I'M DONE WITH YOU, YOU'LL KNOW WHOSE BOSS 'ROUND HERE.
NO!
I DON'T WANT TO BE BOTHERED!
I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM. I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY I WAS IN THE MUSEUM.
BUT YOU STILL COME AT ME. I SEE YOU WON'T LEAVE ME ALONE.
THERE'S SOME VOICE INSIDE ME WHICH SAYS YOU ONLY UNDERSTAND FORCE.
HEY! WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M GOING TO TEACH YOU A LESSON! OF MY OWN.
I-I'M NOT SURE HOW I CAN DO THIS...
...BUT I KNOW ALL I'VE GOT TO DO IS TO THINK--

--AND YOU WON'T BOTHER ME AGAIN!
WHY DON'T I REMEMBER ANYTHING? WHAT HAPPENED TO ME?
I-I DON'T KNOW, BUT I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE-- WALK THROUGH THE WALL.
NEED TIME FOR CONTEMPLATION.
D-DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW I CAN DO THAT... I NEED TIME TO THINK... TO SORT OUT ANSWERS.
WHILE...
ALL RIGHT, WHAT'S THAT NOISE IN--
...OH... MY... GOD...
IT ONLY TAKES S...ONDS FOR PATROLWOMAN ANN RANDALL TO ...AIN SOME OF HER COM-POSURE. AND THE
O'MALLEY! WE NEED A DOCTOR-- FAST!
IT'S BERTHA... CELL #7. THAT NEW WOMAN DID SOMETHING TO HER--
--THEN ESCAPED!
HOW BAD IS IT, ANN?
I DON'T THINK YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW, O'MALLEY.
SHORTLY..
GOT A DIME FOR A CUP OF COFFEE, LADY? JUST A DIME.
LET ME ALONE.
ALL I WANT IS A MEASLY DIME, LADY. THEN I WON'T BOTHER YOU NONE.
I SAID I WANT TO BE ALONE!
AND I MEANT IT!

EXPLAIN YOURSELF, XANDER.
I'VE PIQUED YOUR INTEREST, STRANGE? VERY GOOD!
PERHAPS IT WILL MAKE THIS BATTLE THAT MUCH MORE INTERESTING TO ME.
IF YOU WISH TO LEARN HOW I CAUSED YOUR VENERABLE ANCIENT ONE TO STRIP YOU OF YOUR POWERS--YOU'LL HAVE TO FIGHT ME FOR THE INFORMATION!
NO! HE'S CONJURED THE WILD WINDS OF WATOOMB!
THEY ENCIRCLE ME... CAN'T FREE MYSELF!
CAN'T CONCENTRATE ...BRING MY THOUGHTS TOGETHER... I-I NO LONGER HAVE THE ULTIMATE POWERS TO DEFEND MYSELF.
YOU'LL GET NO ANSWERS THIS WAY, STRANGE.
YOU'LL NEVER LEARN WHY THE CREATORS WANT YOU--
--NEVER LEARN WHAT THE QUADRIVERSE IS...
...OR EVEN THE TRUE REASONS YOU ARE NO LONGER THE SORCERER SUPREME... AND SIMPLY JUST A MAN WITH MYSTIC POWERS
PROVE YOU ARE BETTER THAN A MERE MORTAL, STRANGE. PROVE YOURSELF TO XANDER!
IN THE NAME OF THE ETERNAL VISHANTI-- LET THE WINDS OF WATOOMB CEASE!
GOOD, STRANGE. YOU ARE NOT THE EASY VICTORY I WAS EXPECTING.
THERE IS FIGHT LEFT IN YOU.

BUT PERHAPS YOU NEED SOME KNOWLEDGE TO TANTALIZE YOU, STRANGE. TO EDGE YOU ON.
KNOW THEN THAT THE CREATORS-- THAT MY MASTERS PLANTED IN THE ANCIENT ONE'S MIND THE IDEA OF TESTING YOU FOR THE ULTIMATE LIFE-CONVERSION.
KNOW THAT IT WAS MY MASTERS WHO CAUSED HIM TO CREATE THOSE ILLUSIONS YOU SAW... FROM THE SUPPOSED DESTRUCTION OF YOUR WORLD TO ITS IMAGINARY RE-CREATION.
ALL OF THAT WAS PLANNED SIMPLY TO FORCE THE ANCIENT ONE TO STRIP YOU OF THE POWERS HE GAVE TO YOU.
TO GUARANTEE THE FINAL PLANS OF THE CREATORS WOULD GO UNCHECKED!
IS IT, EX-SORCERER? IS IT?
IS THAT KNOWLEDGE ENOUGH TO HELP YOU BURST FREE FROM MY INDESTRUCTABLE BANDS OF CYTTORAK?
HE MOVES TOO QUICKLY ... CONJURES HIS SPELLS FASTER THAN I CAN PREPARE MY OWN!
BUT, IN THE NAME OF THE ETERNAL VISHANTI-- I STILL HAVE MY SPELLS OF DISSOLVEMENT!
I'M NOT USED TO FIGHTING WITH REDUCED POWERS. I'M STILL NOT EVEN CERTAIN OF WHICH POWERS I DO POSSESS.
I CAN STILL SHATTER THE BANDS WHICH BIND ME!
AND I CAN STILL PLAN MY OWN COURSE OF ACTION...
...EVEN WHILE KNOWING THIS XANDER IS MORE POWERFUL THAN I AM.
I CAN PLAN, AND I CAN BE SURE THAT I WILL WIN!


WHAT? YOU BROKE THROUGH THE CRIMSON BANDS ALREADY?
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
I'M NO ILLUSION, XANDER, AND THOUGH I MAY NOT BE THE SORCERER SUPREME, I AM STILL COMING FOR YOU, COMING TO STOP YOU.
NO YOU'RE NOT, STRANGE. NOT WHILE I CAN UNLEASH MY MYSTIC BOLTS AT YOU.
WHICH THE SHIELD OF THE SERAPHIM DEFLECTS WITH EASE!
THEN YOU FORCE ME TO PLAY MY FINAL HAND, STRANGE. TO USE MY ULTIMATE POWERS AGAINST YOU!
FOR IN MY HANDS LIES THE POWER MYSTIC! THE POWER TO DRAW UPON THE VERY STARS THEMSELVES TO DO MY BIDDING!
AND IN MY HAND LIES THE POWER TO STOP YOU, XANDER.
NOT WITH MYSTIC ENCHANTMENTS... NOT WITH SPELLS OF CURSES.
NOOOO!!!
BUT WITH THE POWER ONLY A MAN CAN MUSTER!
A MAN WHO DOESN'T NEED TO BE A GODHEAD TO PROVE WHAT HE IS TO HIMSELF!!


IF IT'S TRUE... IF YOU DID CAUSE ME TO LOSE MY EXTRA POWERS... TO STEP DOWN FROM BEING A GOD...
...AND IF IT'S A WEAKNESS TO SIMPLY BE A MAN--
--THAN I THANK YOU FOR WHAT YOU DID, XANDER!
NO ONE SHOULD BE THAT CLOSE TO THE HEAVENS!
BUT, THERE IS STILL A MYSTERY HERE, ONE WHICH CONCERNS YOU AND YOUR MYSTERIOUS MASTERS.
ONE WHICH WILL BE PEELED AWAY UNDER THE EVER-PRESENT EYE OF AGAMOTTO.
EH? HIS BODY SHIMMERS IN THE GLOW OF THE EYE.
THERE! A ROBED BEING-- ONE OF THOSE HE CALLED THE CREATORS.
I'VE NO IDEA WHAT THEY PLAN, BUT THIS I KNOW--WHATEVER I MUST FACE--
DOCTOR STRANGE STANDS READY!
WHILE, ON EARTH...
LOOK! THERE SHE IS!
LET ME WALK IN PEACE, GENTLEMEN--
--FOR I SWEAR IF YOU TAKE ONE FURTHER STEP FORWARD...
...THIS CITY WILL SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR ACTIONS!
GET HER!

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE ALL-NEW, KING-SIZED **DOCTOR STRANGE ANNUAL** ON SALE NEXT MONTH

AND IN TWO MONTHS, BE SURE TO READ: **PANIC IN NEW YORK CITY!**